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Authenticity and treatment of the historical background in the revolutionary romances of William Gilmore Simms

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THE AUTHENTICITY AND TREATMENT
of the
HISTORICAL BACKGROUND
in
THE REVOLUTIONARY ROMANCES OF WILLIAM GILMORE SIMMS

by

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Let our homage be
Large as that splendid prodigality
Of force and love, wherewith he staunchly
wrought
Out from the quarries of his own deep
thought,
Unnumbered shapes; whether of good or ill,
No puny puppets whose false action frets
On a false stage, like feeble Marionettes;

But life-like, human still;
Types of a by-gone age of crime and lust;
Or, grand historic forms, in whom we view
Re-vivified, and re-created
stand,
The braves who strove through cloud-encompassed
ways,
Infinite travail, and malign dispraise,
To guard, to save, to wrench from tyrant
hordes,
By the pen's virtue, or the lordlier sword's
Unravished Liberty.
The virgin huntress on a virgin strand! *

* Hayne, Paul Hamilton, Poems. Boston: Lothrop Publishing Co; 1882. p. 314. Excerpt taken from A Poem in memory of Simms and delivered on the night of the 13th of December, 1877 "at the Charlestown Academy of Music," as prologue to the "Dramatic Entertainment" in aid of the "Simms Memorial fund." p. 315.

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Introduction: Purpose of Study

William Gilmore Simms, thoroughly American in the choice of his subjects, second only to Cooper in his ability to construct an interesting plot and tell a story effectively, ranks as one of the foremost of the early American novelists. An accurate chronicler, he wrote about the people of South Carolina in the embittered times of the closing years of the Revolution and sketched with fidelity the events of this period. The purpose of this study is to trace the authenticity and treatment of the historical background in his seven revolutionary romances. These novels of the Revolutionary War were chosen as the subject of this study chiefly because, for a long time they enjoyed great popularity, especially in the South, and are considered even today by most critics as his best works. Unlike The Leatherstocking Tales of James Fenimore Cooper, these seven novels were written in historical order, many of the events and characters carrying through from one narrative to another.

History in Plot, Setting, and Character

Simms's use of history finds characteristic outlet in his plots, settings, and characters. In the first of these, his plots, he captured the movement and color of a historical period. To him history was not a dull sequence of haphazard events, a skeleton of dead facts, but rather something alive that without too much effort could be moulded into story form by the pen of a capable writer. His attitude is shown in his own words: "The chief value of history consists in its proper employment for the purposes of art."[1] Adventure, brave deeds, violence, all within the range of history -- these are constituents of romantic plot. And yet historical plot is not acceptable to Simms unless it is based upon authentic settings, which are as much a part of his novels as are his plots and like them concern the South. They are well-drawn, exact, and true to the actions, characters, and general tone of his narratives. Charleston, Savannah, Ninety-Six, Dorchester, Camden, Orangeburg can still be found on the modern map as can

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1. Views and Reviews in American Literature, p. 15.

also the Edisto, Congaree, Wateree, and Pedee rivers. But plot and setting, however realistic, would be lifeless without characters, and there, too, Simms is historical when he includes such famous names as Francis Marion, Nathanael Greene, Colonel Tarleton, Governor Rutledge, and others who lived and fought during the times about which Simms wrote. These heroes are not dead; in the pages of Simms they speak the language that changed the course of a nation.

Simms, The Writer

After the foregoing discussion of the purpose of this study, what can be said about Simms himself? First of all, he was pre-eminent among those who for fictional purposes exploited the past. No early American novelist, not even Cooper, was better qualified to use history as the basis for his works. Born in South Carolina in 1806, by 1870, according to his biographer William P. Trent, Simms became, next to Edgar Allen Poe, the most representative and talented of the southern authors writing previous to the Civil War.[2] As a

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2. William P. Trent, William Gilmore Simms, p. 159.

boy, he read profusely from the annals of his native state. In her conversations with him, his grandmother confined herself largely to exciting tales of the Revolutionary War, little realizing that someday her appreciative listener would put them to use. His father, too, once an Indian fighter under General Andrew Jackson, told the boy of his own personal experiences in the Seminole country. Young Simms frequently rambled over the historical ground of South Carolina, listening to old-timers with their vivid reminiscences of Indian warfare or exploits of the American Revolution.[3] These lively experiences did wonders to the young boy, and proved to be invaluable in his later writing years. He left behind him over eighty volumes of prose and poetry, most of which is now wholly forgotten.[4] He may have been born in a wrong environment, constantly struggling as he did for public acclaim and a place in Charleston aristocratic society that he admired but which refused to accept him. Since Simms knew the South intimately, his

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3. Ibid., p.12.

4. A. S. Salley, Catalogue of the Salley Collection of the Works of William Gilmore Simms, preface, p.5.

novels contain a wealth of information about colonial life, data which are becoming each year more difficult to find.

Simms used three themes for the basis of most of his novels: The Indian, the frontier, and the Revolutionary War. Though like Cooper, he also turned to the more "refined" materials in foreign backgrounds, like Cooper, too, he found that his revolutionary romances proved to be by far his most fruitful field. In these spirited chronicles he carried the reader through the whole period in the South from the fall of Charleston in May, 1780, to the surrender of Cornwallis in October, two years later.

His romances concern events rather than persons, yet since the two are closely related, he made the one as independent as he possibly could of the other. Simms had a great liking for history of all kinds, and especially the unwritten or unconsidered history which to him was the great essential. He wrote about errors and wrongs, of courage and tenacious patriotism. These narratives center around the well-known partisan warfare in the South, a struggle which constituted one of the most brilliant chapters in our revolutionary history.

They seek to illustrate some of the events which grew out of and characterized this warfare. Along with its courage and patriotism, Simms displayed, likewise, its crimes and horrors. He disliked unreal idealism. To him a story in which rainbow colors predominated was too easy a challenge.[5] He was interested in life as it was really lived -- man in all his phases, modified by circumstance. In consequence, his object was to adhere as closely as possible to the actual event. To stimulate the imagination and curiosity in his reader was, for him, a chief concern. History was, of course, a necessary adjunct. His tales highly interested a local audience because of their patriotic and sectional pictures and temper.

The Revolutionary Romances

Simms as a writer, however, becomes pertinent to this study chiefly as the author of seven historical romances to which several references have already been made.

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5. Mellichampe, Advertisement, p. 5.

In 1825-1836 he published two romances somewhat resembling Cooper's The Spy in theme and treatment.[6] These were The Partisan and Mellichampe, the first dealing with the events of the Revolutionary War. The others in the series, Kinsman (later The Scout), or The Black Riders of the Congaree; Katharine Walton, or The Rebel of Dorchester; Woodcraft, or The Sword and the Distaff; The Forayers, or The Raid of the Dog Days; Eutaw, A Sequel to The Forayers, all appeared between the years 1833 and 1856.[7] These novels are not merely chronicles of traditional heroes. As indicated earlier many of his characters are national figures, familiar to our daily reading; his plots truly portray the conditions of the time. The leading events — every general action — and all chief characteristics have been taken from the records of history or from scarcely less reliable oral tradition.

Simms wrote most of these romances when his mind was full of Francis Marion and his ragged troopers, of

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6. A.S. Salley, op. cit., pp. 34-9.

7. William P. Trent, op. cit., p. 74.

brave deeds done by lowly men, of midnight excursions from camps hidden in the depths of the swamps -- in short, of guerilla warfare in all its picturesqueness. He had read Marion's own letters, had conversed with old men who had served under the "Swamp Fox," and had walked over all the spots of Revolutionary War fame. He consulted Moultrie, Drayton, Ramsey, and Johnson, all great American figures of the Revolution, for historical data relating to the close of the Revolutionary period and the development of South Carolina from a rebellious colony into an independent republican state.[9] These have been his chief sources of information; though in his progress, he found it advisable to consult, in addition, the accounts of Holmes, Bancroft, Graham, Tarleton, and several other writers of the period.[10]

Although Simms was a poet, dramatist, historian, biographer, essayist, lecturer, and journalist, he was, above all, a novelist. He moved in a field that was native to him, the memories of his own region. He rediscovered the South, and that section about which he

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9. Infra . p. 10.

wrote offered rich human material. Simms was trying to do for his section of the country what Cooper had done for the North. He believed that Cooper was the first to awaken American writers to the fictional possibilities of the American scene.[11] To him, as one of the early romantic novelists, the human and American materials could never be depleted. Political and social causes kept "his South" in isolation, and since her mother was a native South Carolinian, Simms's romantic novels are characteristically southern. On his treatment of historical themes he said,

> It is local, sectional and to be national in literature, one must needs be sectional.[12]

Simms's Writing Plan

The Partisan was projected by Simms as a sort of a ground plan on which he was to erect a subsequent series to comprise familiar events, habits, and manners.

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11. Views and Reviews in American Literature, p. xii.

12. The Yemassee and the Cabin, dedicatory epistle, p. 4.

He endeavored to maintain a proper historical connection among the revolutionary tales, corresponding to the several transitional periods of the Revolutionary War in South Carolina.[13]

While The Partisan opened this series of seven novels with the fall of Charleston and the disheartening defeat of the first continental army under Gates at Camden, the second unit, Mellichampe, illustrated the interval between this event and the arrival of Greene with his poorly equipped and poorly trained second army; and was really intended to do honor to the intense patriotism of these scattered bands of slaves, swamp-suckers, plantation hands, and planters which still maintained a lively warfare against the foe among the swamps and thickets, not operating decisively for its rescue but rather keeping alive the spirit of the country.

Concerned as it was with the third period in the historical sequence, Katherine Walton was designed to close the careers of certain parties introduced to the

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13. The Partisan, introduction, p. 13.

reader by The Partisan and Mellichampe and to complete Simms's trilogy. It showed the fluctuations of the conflict, the spirit in which it was carried on, and, in addition, dealt with certain events of great individual interest and their influence upon the general history. This tale brought down the record to a period when, for the first time, the British were made to understand that the conflict was doubtful, that their conquests were insecure, and that, taking an over-all glance at the whole territory, the question whether they would be able to maintain their hold upon the strong places of which they had so long held possession became dangerously pressing.

The Scout, the next novel in the series of seven, originally published under the name of The Kinsman, had to do with the period when the sly policy of Greene began to make itself felt in the slow but gradual isolation and overthrow of the frontier posts and forts established with the view to impress the people in various sections of the territory. The Scout closed with the siege of Ninety-Six; an event which, though a British victory, left the enemy at the same time in such a weak condition

as to render their short-lived triumph of little value.

The Forayers, the fifth in the series, is a departure from Simms's usual procedure in that it subordinates the historical narrative to a discussion of social conditions, conditions which under tensions of all sorts were continually shifting. Here Simms became novelist instead of historian.

In Eutaw, the sixth novel in the series, the battle of Eutaw Springs left little else to describe. Neither of the two great opposing parties was in a condition to undertake any bold enterprise, and the final capture of Lord Cornwallis at Yorktown forced Great Britain to concede independence to the revolted colonies. That her colonies would rise into free states was quickly becoming a reality.

Woodcraft, the last in the series of seven, dealt with the period when peace was agreed upon, when the British army was about to evacuate Charleston, and when the Americans were crowding about their outposts eager to come in. The provisional articles of peace with King George III were signed at Paris on November 13, 1782.

The British forces in Charleston prepared to abandon the city early in the following December, an event which took place on the fourteenth of that month.[14]

Sources of Information

Simms followed the best authorities he could find in his endeavor to pick out specific characteristics and illustrate the careers of his military figures. Some of these sources hitherto had never appeared in print.[15] In addition, he read and consulted Joseph Johnson's Traditions and Reminiscences of the American Revolution (1851); the two-volume work entitled Memoirs of the American Revolution written by John Drayton and published in 1821; he carefully studied the two volumes of William Moultrie's Memoirs of the American Revolution(1802); he used David Ramsey's History of the Revolution in South Carolina which was published in 1785.[16] These histories, even today, are recognized as being the chief authentic sources for the

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14. Woodcraft, p. 5.

15. The History of South Carolina, p. 151.

16. The Life of Francis Marion, f.n., p. 58.

early history of South Carolina.[17] Though his treatment of certain textual chronicles (General Gates, for instance) may seem at times to be too harsh, nevertheless, these strictures are based upon authority. Though his revival of certain facts, however true, might have been questioned by readers of his own day as lacking in good taste, he regarded this attitude irrelevant, since he was more concerned with what future generations might say about his work than with the opinions of his contemporaries.[18] He strongly believed that in certain instances the individual had to be made an example of for the benefit of the race. The disasters of the country, especially those which arose from obvious errors of its people, should be painted in the strongest possible colors. The people would then know how best to avoid future evils. By this means mistakes and misfortunes could be made contributing factors to an eventual triumph. In this way his novels could be made useful to both man and society.

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17. Allan Nevins, The American States During and After the Revolution, 1775-1789, p. 557 (of these works only Johnson was available for this study.)

18. Views and Reviews in American Literature, p.23.

Simms's Beliefs about History in His Writing

Simms was one of America's first highly equipped professional writers of romance. His "undiluted" historical themes were genuinely and originally American. His was a magnificent attempt to assist in the development of a home literature in the South, and he made every effort to aid an enterprise that in any way promised to develop southern literature.

Simms's first major work in the field of history was the first school History of South Carolina published in 1840.[19] In 1917 Mrs. Mary Simms Oliphant, his granddaughter, revised the history and secured its adoption for the public schools of South Carolina by the State Board of Education.[20] New editions were printed in 1918, 1922,

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19. A.S. Salley, op. cit., p. 105.

20. Ibid.

1938, and 1940. In addition to this work, Simms wrote his South Carolina in the Revolutionary War (1853), The Lily and the Totem, or The Huguenots in Florida (1853), and The Sack and Destruction of the City of Columbia, South Carolina (1865).[21]

As a biographer Simms made two contributions which are considered source material for the revolutionary history of his state.[22] In 1844 his Life of Francis Marion was published, and in 1858 appeared his Life of Nathanael Greene, Major-General in the Army of the Revolution. Both of these works have a definite bearing upon South Carolina's struggles between the years 1780-1782, the period covered by Simms's revolutionary novels. His Geography of South Carolina was published in 1843 as a companion to his history, and Father Abbot, or The Home Tourist, another geography, was printed in 1849.[23] These foregoing titles amply indicate that Simms's knowledge of local geography exerted an important influence

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21. Ibid., p. 109.

22. Ibid., pp. 105-108.

23. Ibid., p. 109.

on his general treatment of history.

A single biography of Simms remains as the chief biographical source. In 1892 William Gilmore Simms, by William P. Trent, was issued by Houghton, Mifflin and Company in the American Men of Letters series. Despite the priority of the volume and the reputation of its author, Trent's study has been severely questioned, as is shown in the following judgment:

> Although the author was grossly unjust to Simms, to Charleston, to South Carolina, and to the whole South, he filled the book with errors, misrepresentations, and displays of bitter prejudices.[24]

In this work, however, Trent contributed a rather complete Simms bibliography which proved helpful to later scholars. The latest contribution toward this study, compiled over a period of sixty years, is the Catalogue of the Salley Collection of the Works of William Gilmore Simms, printed for A.S. Salley, Columbia, South Carolina, in 1943.

Reviews, essays, and addresses written and given by Simms, also form a special section of his works and

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24. Ibid., preface, p. 5.

cannot be left unmentioned. This material, much of it published, offers additional information toward a fuller understanding of Simms, especially in regard to his ideas about literature and history. Before publication many of these appeared in southern newspapers and magazines.[25]

In order to show how reliable Simms is as a historical novelist, I am selecting for comparison four well-known modern histories (Allan Nevins, The American States During and After the Revolution, 1775-1789, 1924; Arthur Meier Schlesinger, The Colonial Merchants and the American Revolution, 1763-1776, 1918; John Fiske, The American Revolution, Vol. II, 1892; Francis Vinton Greene, The Revolutionary War and the Military Policy of the United States, 1911,) that cover the same field. These will reveal how indebted twentieth century scholarship is to this indefatigable worker of the early nineteenth century. The fact that Simms's research has remained valid through the course of a century is undeniable proof of its historical authenticity. Of course, Simms's portrayals and judgments are too rich in detail to be

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25. Ibid., pp. 119-120.

used more than in outline or as general background, but in these two particulars, especially, they have proved invaluable to modern scholarship. In addition to Nevins, Schlesinger, Fiske, and Greene, Simms's own History of South Carolina was used as was also his Life of Francis Marion and Life of Nathanael Greene to obtain information about specific historical characters. Reference has also been made to the Official Correspondence between Brigadier-General Thomas Sumter and Major-General Nathanael Greene from 1780-1783 in order to check specific military information and action. This Correspondence forms a section of the Year Book, City of Charleston, South Carolina, 1899.

Authenticity of Events in Plots of Revolutionary Romances

In this particular section (pages 19-70) I wish to parallel the historical background as Simms presents it in his revolutionary novels with passages from modern, well-known historians, Arthur Meier Schlesinger, John Fiske, Francis V. Greene, and Allan Nevins. By a comparison of this kind, Simms's reliability as a recorder of historical events can be clearly shown. For these historians not only went to the sources which Simms himself consulted, but drew heavily upon him, as is shown by their references in text, footnote, and bibliography. In the first event, by consulting these sources directly, they establish the fact that both they and Simms possessed a common confidence in what

they were doing; in the latter event, of course, they were revealing a confidence in Simms himself.

Though the narrative of The Partisan begins in the summer of 1780, Simms reminds his reader that it is necessary to go back to the beginning of the revolutionary campaign of 1779 in the North in order to get an adequate picture of the conditions influencing enemy action in the South, conditions which soon turned the invading British forces toward Charleston and the rich plantation lands of South Carolina.

At the opening of the 1779 campaign, according to Simms's own narrative, the British army was unable to make any decided impression, climate and topography offering few opportunities, and since the available wealth was no longer an inducement for further action, the invader gave up all hopes of effecting a conquest of the states north of Chesapeake Bay.[26]

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26. "When the war had been in progress for four years without producing any substantial results except the establishment of a base at New York, it was determined to make the South the principal theatre of operations, in the hope that if the North could not be subdued, at least its importance could be greatly diminished and its expansion prevented by restoring the Southern Colonies to British allegiance, and thus creating a barrier on the south similar to that of Canada on the north." Francis V. Greene, The Revolutionary War and the Military Policy of the United States, pp. 182-3.

In consequence, the British turned their attention to the southern states where the scattered population and greater wealth seemed to promise easier progress and abundant spoils. The northern armies, although engaged in decisive enterprises, afforded the employment of troops rather than the accomplishment of results.

The arrival of a strong fleet from England under the command of Arbuthnot enabled the already twice-defeated General Clinton to operate offensively by concentrating his power upon Charleston and the southern states.[27] It was in December, 1779, that the British general with the best of his army sailed from New York to make his third attempt against the Confederacy.[28] His plan, Simms reminds us, was to begin at the extremities and cut the country off state by state rather than strike at the center where his foe was more deeply concentrated. It must be remembered that the South, at no time, possessed such an army as was maintained during the whole war in and around the chief northern centers. Charleston, South Carolina's chief

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27. Ibid., p. 206.

28. Ibid.

city, which stood an eight-week siege and suffered a famine, fell to Clinton's forces on the twelfth day of May, 1780.[29] The city was overwhelmed by a vastly superior force at the moment of her greatest weakness. Almost all of her regular army assigned to her assistance had become prisoners of war.[30] The chief resistance thus being broken, the invader immediately began to advance into the very heart of South Carolina.

According to Simms, the fall of Charleston was followed by a train of circumstances which exhausted the spirits and resources of the country. Having accomplished their first object, the British next wanted to secure the general submission of the state. To this end the victors, marching toward North Carolina, planted garrisons at prominent points of

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29. John Fiske, The American Revolution, Vol.II, p. 178.

30. "Sir Henry Clinton jubilantly wrote three weeks later (June 4, 1780) from his headquarters in Charleston, ' I may venture to assert that there are few men in South Carolina who are not either our prisoners or in arms with us.' " Allan Nevins, op. cit., p. 375.

the country during their progress.[31] Their advance caused the retreat of bodies of Americans which had gathered for the purpose of relieving Charleston. The British were triumphant everywhere. The state, without a domestic government or without any provisions to supply its small scattered bands of fighters, was despondent.

Dorchester, located about twenty miles from Charleston, was one of the many military posts sufficiently scattered for the general control of an extensive territory. It was amply provided with munitions of war, well fortified, and was garrisoned by large bodies of troops under experienced officers. The people, under British rule, generally put on a show of acquiescence which few in reality felt and which many were secretely but emphatically determined never to submit to.

These were the conditions existing in South Carolina and Dorchester, the village which became the pivot for patriotic deeds in Simms's novel, The Partisan, the first in the series of his seven romances. These were the

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31. John Fiske, op. cit., p. 178.

discouraging circumstances under which the partisan warfare began. It is at this point in the early summer of 1780 that The Partisan picks up the thread of historical events which comprise the background of Simms's revolutionary tales.

The unrest and false patriotism in the citizens of Dorchester toward the English crown, and portrayed by Simms, started a general hatred for the British, a feeling greatly enhanced when General Clinton, commander of Charleston and the southern British forces, issued a military proclamation affecting the life of each citizen. This order while denouncing all who continued in arms, offered pardon for past offences and a reinstatement of all former privileges. Able men were given twenty days to fight for the crown or else be treated as rebels.[38] The British needed more troops

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38. "The British commander could hardly have taken a more injudicious step. Under the first proclamation, many of the people were led to comply with the British demands because they wished to avoid fighting altogether; under the second, a neutral attitude became impossible, and these lovers of peace and quiet, when they found themselves constrained to take an active part on one side or the other, naturally preferred to help their friends rather than their enemies." John Fiske, op. cit., p. 181.

to start their proposed campaign into North Carolina and Virginia. Citizens inwardly cried vengeance for the many crimes the enemy, both British and Tory, committed against them. One of the main characters in The Partisan expresses this attitude in the following outburst:

> " I'd rather eat acorns, ... and sleep in the swamps in August, than hush my tongue when I feel that it's right to speak. They shan't cross over me, though I die for it ... flesh and blood can't stand their persecutions. There's no chance for life, let alone property."[33]

The murder of innocent Mrs. Frampton by a British dragoon in the ranks of Huck, the infamous Tory captain, was a story of brutality -- which in the fierce Tory warfare in the South, when neighbors fought neighbors was almost a daily occurrence. These events poured fuel upon the fire of hatred which slowly drove the Carolinians to take up arms against their detested foe.[34]

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33. The Partisan, pp. 33-4.

34. "They (the British) had hanged many opponents, especially men charged with violating paroles, they had 'burnt a prodigious number of houses, and turned a vast many women, almost naked, into the woods'; in short they seemed determined 'to break every man's spirit, or, if they can't, to ruin him.' But the spirit of South Carolina was not to be broken. With surprising rapidity an effective partisan resistance was begun." Allan Nevins, op. cit., p. 376.

As Simms mentions in The Partisan the British treatment of Carolina as a conquered province provoked the spirit of determined resistance, starting partisan warfare which blazed and spread quickly throughout the entire territory.[35] Against many difficulties the partisans supplied themselves with arms and ammunition, and when victorious relied upon the dead for the ammunition for the next campaign. The men from Dorchester formed only one of the many small squads that rose in arms in every part of the state; they fought the British and Tories whenever there was prospect of success, and they pressed from one place to another wherever they heard of an enemy party. It was not long after the fall of Charleston, however, that these groups began to reap the first small rewards of their efforts.[36]

They were tremendously encouraged by the news that not only were they to be furnished with weapons and munitions but that a regular army led by General Gates, the hero of Saratoga, was coming to assist them. This news, music to patriot ears, forced the British to take

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35. John Fiske, op. cit., p. 182.

36. Allen Nevins, op. cit., pp. 576-7.

indiscriminate action in order to effect complete submission before Gates arrived. This fury, Simms reveals, only caused more southerners to join the ranks of the partisans and increased the zeal in those who valued liberty above all else. For months their only shelter was the woods and swamps, and hardened by exposure, they left their hiding places when the enemy least expected them. They cautiously went from thicket to thicket; they hung upon the flanks of the British when they were on the march; they shot down enemy sentries -- always taking a bloody toll whenever the enemy entered their territory, a toll which even included Captain Travis, a coadjutor of Huck, the loyalist, whose name had become associated with some of the most cruel atrocities during the Revolution.[37]

It was in this manner that Simms introduced his historical background to form the foundation for his series of seven novels. It strengthened the thread of his narrative, and from it he created many of his characters. The activities of Colonel Richard Walton, the considerate southern gentleman and father of Katherine,

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37. History of South Carolina, p. 255.

who will be mentioned in connection with subsequent novels, form a part of this narrative. At the beginning of the war, Colonel Walton commanded a cavalry troop and fought the British under Prevost.[38] He offered to submit shortly after the fall of Charleston when Clinton and Arbuthnot named him peace commissioner, his chief duty being that of restoring harmony in the revolted colony. This called for nothing but neutrality from the inhabitants; therefore, it secured Walton without subjecting him to military duties which the British had a perfect right to ask. He settled down at "The Oaks," his plantation, where he lived with his daughter, Katherine, and niece, Emily Singleton, and enjoyed a secluded and quiet home life. Notified by the commander of the Dorchester post that the new proclamation issued by Clinton allowed him only twenty days to take up arms for the crown, the colonel became angry at the enemy's dishonorable actions and lies and refused to submit. Swearing that he would never fight his countrymen, he left his home to join the fighting partisans.

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38. Prevost was the British commander who tried unsuccessfully to obtain the surrender of Charleston in May, 1779. Francis V. Greene, op. cit., pp. 197-6.

It was shortly after Colonel Walton's decision that news about Lord Rawdon, the British commander, reached camp. Communications between enemy military posts had been cut down by parties of raiding Americans, and now only the posts of Ninety-Six, Camden, and Augusta were occupied by the British. Slowly Rawdon evacuated the minor garrisons and drew his men and material into these remaining outposts. Hearing that Gates was on his way to attack his position, he concentrated his strength in the best defensive areas.

In the swamps the news of Rawdon's maneuvers had reached the band of patriots. Dispersing a body of Tories under Gainey at Britton's Neck, Marion continued to harrass Tory and British outposts and communication lines so that the enemy would continue to withdraw troops from out-of-the-way positions.

In midsummer the news of the approach of seven thousand continentals (an exaggerated number)[39] led by

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39. "Gates was at Rugely's Mills, thirteen miles north of Camden, with a force which he imagined numbered 7,000 men, but in reality, as his adjutant-general informed him on the following morning, numbered 3,052 present fit for duty." Francis V. Greene, op. cit., p. 216.

Gates spread widely in South Carolina. Such assurance, Simms mentions, helped to stir even the lukewarm Americans who had not yet begun to fight. As for the general run of the people, they were highly excited, gathering in small squads throughout the colony, whispering the name of Gates. In the meantime, other victories by Sumter in the up-country; Marion on the Pedee; Pickens with his newly organized cavalry; of Butler, Horry, James throughout the various sections of the state, kept alive the ferment. Smaller successes nearer home greatly bolstered morale. Hostilities began in remote areas where fighting never before had taken place. Upon hearing news of this recent promotion and plan of General Gates, the Black River country was up in insurrection. This was Marion's province, and it was largely through his efforts that such a widespread outbreak was begun.

At this juncture a little group of partisans around Dorchester, headed by Major Robert Singleton, temporarily moved from under cover of the swamps to join Colonel Marion who was gathering his guerilla forces in anticipation of Gates's arrival.

Colonel Walton, the loyal partisan, was on the alert. His troop, having easy movement without baggage wagons and prisoners, pushed forward toward the borders of North Carolina where this leader hoped to join forces with the continentals of Maryland and Virginia under the Baron de Kalb.[40] Walton resolved to offer his personal services to his friend, Gates, whom he had known in Virginia before the war.

While enroute to this predetermined meeting place where Gates was to assume supreme command, followers of Major Singleton heard the story of Amos Gaskens, a Tory, who had raised a party and was devastating the neighborhood of St. Stephens and St. Johns, Berkley. Gaskens was the scourge of this section, and history recorded many of his terrible deeds.[41] His party fell into a partisan ambush, and after a brief struggle the Tories were dispersed, prisoners freed, and Gaskens himself killed. To the partisans war was always a duty, never a pleasure, since after all Tories were brother colonials. Nevertheless the loyalists under Fyles, Huck, Tynes, and Harrison

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40. John Fiske, op. cit., p. 185.

41. The Partisan, p. 281. This cannot be authenticated by works cited.

continued to molest the patriots whenever their scouts were able to locate American positions.

After the encounter with Gaskens, Singleton's followers finally effected their meeting with Marion's brigade to march toward a union with Gates.

According to the narrative of The Partisan, this union (August 15, 1780) was a relief to his predecessor, the brave German soldier, Baron de Kalb. Not only were there no provisions, but the militia came in slowly and in unimportant numbers.[42] Despite these handicaps, however, Gates was not discouraged. Weary of their march, the soldiers received none of the provisions Gates had promised them at the outset. To make matters worse, Marion's brigade, made up as it was of Negroes, boys, and men, was the object of great merriment on the part of the continentals who, in contrast, provided some kind of a military spectacle, for they were well mounted, despite poor attire and inadequate equipment.

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42. "Gates found things in a most deplorable state: lack of arms, lack of tents, lack of food, lack of medicines, and, above all, lack of money. The all-pervading neediness which in those days beset the American people, through their want of an efficient government, was never more thoroughly exemplified. It required a very different man from Gates to mend matters." John Fiske, op. cit., p. 187.

Lacking the imagination of a great leader, Gates was indifferent toward the service proffered him by Marion, laying more emphasis on the appearance of the brigade and its leader than he did on the past achievements and abilities of the "Swamp Fox." According to Simms, Marion was not allowed to employ his troops with the main army, being given only minor duties while the main force continued its way to meet Lord Rawdon at Camden. The army pressed forward, ignorant of its course, unconscious of the steps they were taking. In contrast, the precautions taken by the British general, Rawdon, were timely and well-judged.[43] His command was very shortly delivered into yet abler hands, for with the approach of the southern army, Cornwallis, with a part of his garrison from Charleston, set forth from Camden. Though lacking in intelligence about the enemy, Gates continued his advance against the advice of

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43. "His movements were not unknown to Rawdon, who commanded at Camden. He called in his outlying detachments, reported the facts to Cornwallis and urged him to come in person with reinforcements from Charleston. Cornwallis did so, and arrived at Camden three days before the battle." Francis V. Greene, op. cit., pp. 215-16.

friends.[44] To further prove his ineptitude, Simms mentions that he accepted the information of a British spy sent to him from Camden, never once doubting what the stranger said. Even though only a few hours' march separated him from the foe, he did not know that his rival was not Rawdon but Cornwallis.[45] Self-confidence blinded him.

On the fifteenth of August, 1780, the two armies met. Though the ill-trained and poorly equipped soldiers of the South fought bravely, the odds were against them from the beginning. With not too great difficulty Cornwallis led his regulars through the American lines, and in the consequent wild confusion the patriots forgot the little they knew about warfare. The melee ended with the death of de Kalb. Camden was a complete victory for the

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44. "De Kalb was an experienced soldier, and he had carefully studied the situation and formed a definite, careful plan of operations. It was submitted to Gates, with the approval of all the senior officers. But Gates declined to consider it and forthwith issued an order for the army to march immediately against Camden, the principal British post." Ibid., p. 215.

45. "But strange as it might seem, a day and a night passed by, and Gates had not yet learned that Cornwallis had arrived, but still supposed he had only Rawdon to deal with." John Fiske, op. cit., p. 190.

British who dispersed Gates's army, inflicting heavy losses in dead, wounded, and prisoners.[46] Colonel Marion heard the news of the defeat from an escapee, as he was still performing his piddling duties. Undeterred, he continued his warfare in the swamps.

The second novel in the series, Wellichampe, continued one of the suspended threads of events which formed the plot of The Partisan. The fatal defeat of Gates lost everything in the shape of stores, baggage, and artillery.[47] Every article was to be supplied anew, and congress had no money. The rout of the Americans was complete. Not one company retired in order, every trooper escaped as he could. In another section of Carolina, Sumter's forces were dispersed by cavalry under Tarleton.[48] The town of Dorchester was burned to the ground, the single ray of hope being that Colonel Walton was rescued from the British who had

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46. Francis V. Greene, op. cit., p. 218.

47. Ibid.

48. "Another staggering British blow, already alluded to, was delivered a few days later against Sumter at Fishing-Creek. For the moment North Carolina believed that the war was lost, and some Britons that it was won .." Allan Nevins, op. cit., p. 379.

captured him at Camden. By this time Marion, having made a name for himself, was commissioned a general by Governor Rutledge. The most wealthy and populous portions of the state were assigned to the "Swamp Fox" as his charge; the portion which, even though under complete control of the invader, afforded the wooded retreats with which the partisans had been familiar. A feeling of optimism permeated the British ranks, optimism such as that shown in a speech of a British officer:

> "This last licking of Sumter and the wholesale defeat of Gates, have pretty well done up the rebels in this quarter. Georgia has been long shutup, and North Carolina will only wake up to find her legs fastened. As for Virginia, if Cornwallis goes on at the present rate, he'll straddle her quite in two weeks more. No! I think that rebellion is pretty nigh wound up; and, if we can catch the 'Swamp Fox', or find out where he hides, I'll contrive we shall have no more difficulty from him." [49]

Marion's band was feeble, consisting of small groups from the lower country which had seen little regular service. However, though few in number and lacking in

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49. Mellichampe, p. 49. This optimism may also authenticated by Fiske. "Cornwallis, flushed with victory, boasted that he would soon conquer all of the country south of the Susquahanna. For the moment it began to look as if Lord George Germain's policy of tiring the Americans out might prove successful, after all." John Fiske, op. cit., p. 196.

resources, catching the spirit of their leader, they were never inactive.[50] Mellichamps reveals that promptness and surprise were their essential tactics. Their leader risked nothing. He hung about the enemy, secured intelligence, obstructed military actions whenever and wherever possible, and cut off unwary detachments. By such maneuvers the partisans continued to maintain a haphazard position along the Santee river. Utterly unfurnished with war equipment, they even converted into sabers the saws taken from mills.[51] They engaged in battle when they did not have three rounds of powder for the man. They came into the sight of the foe, simply to tease the British into action and thus scatter enemy forces, and yet the entire group did not have more than seventy-five men, sometimes only one-third that number.[52]

The Tories made up the main part of the enemy force in this section of Carolina. Led by Barefield and Tarleton, Tory and British officers, they ravaged both plantation and village. It was one of these groups,

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50. "To distress the enemy in legitimate warfare was a business in which few partisan commanders have excelled him." Op. Cit., p. 183.

51. Ibid., pp. 183-4.

52. "His force sometimes consisted of less than twenty men, and seldom exceeded seventy." Ibid., p. 183.

led by Barsfield, which the partisans met in sharp conflict, routing them and even slaying Barsfield's assistant. Gabriel Marion, nephew of the "Fox," likewise fell in the conflict.[53] With a large detachment Tarleton vainly continued to pursue Marion. Unable to engage him, he changed his course and started after Sumter, whom he named the "Game Cock."[54] Tarleton continued his chase, while Marion's forces returned to their swamp retreats to await the coming of General Nathanael Greene, the new successor to Gates.[55]

These events bring the reader to the story which is continued in Katherine Walton, the third romance in the series, and the one which completes the trilogy as it was first designed by Simms. The narrative of Katherine Walton opens early in September, 1780, not long after the defeat of Gates at Camden, a defeat which, as previously indicated, was almost a disaster. The treatment of American prisoners was atrocious, many

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53. History of South Carolina, p. 295.

54. Ibid., p. 278.

55. John Fiske, op. cit., pp. 250-1.

being executed upon the slightest pretext or severely punished on questionable testimony. The escape of Colonel Walton at Dorchester and the burning of the village enraged Colonel Balfour, the commandant of Charleston, driving him to seek reprisal. Major John Proctor, Dorchester post commander and unsuccessful lover of Katherine Walton, was blamed for the escape. By this time seeds of dissension had been sown within the higher ranks of the British army, dissension largely created by individuals interested more in their own personal gains than in the welfare of the Empire. As early as 1780 the accused Proctor foretold the eventual outcome of the Revolution:

> "Great Britain is destined to lose her colonies. She is already almost exhausted in the contest. Her resources are consumed. Her debt is enormous. Her expenses are hourly increasing. She can get no more subsidies of men from Germany, and her Irish recruits desert her almost as soon as they reach America. Her ministers would have abandoned the cause before this, but for the encouragement held out by the native loyalists."[34]

The difficulties of supply and demand were too great. The War, according to Proctor, could not last much longer.

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34. Katherine Walton, p. 124.

> 'The vast tract of sea which spreads between this country and Europe is itself sufficient security. To transport troops, arms, and provisions, across this tract is, in each instance, the equivalent to the loss of a battle.' [57]

Simms related that in September of 1780, when Greene superseded Gates in command of the southern army, he faced a serious situation, for he brought with him no troops, and his new army "was rather a shadow then a substance." [58] In all, it consisted of less than two thousand troops who were without pay, clothing, tents, or blankets. [59]

While Gates and Greene were recruiting new forces, Marion and the other partisan commanders were likewise busy achieving victories, which, although minor, nevertheless, not only increased the reputation of the patriot leaders, but raised the morale of their men. On the other hand, perhaps more important events took place elsewhere.

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57. Ibid.

58. Francis V. Greene, op. cit., pp. 282-3.

59. "It is a great misfortune that the little force we have is in such a wretched state for the want of clothing. More than one-half of our numbers are naked, so much so, that we cannot put them on the least kind of duty. Indeed there is a great number that have not any clothes on them, except a little piece of a blanket in the Indian form around their waists." Official Letters of Maj.-Gen. Nathanael Greene. Yearbook, City of Charleston, S.C., 1892, pp. 76-7.

Major Singleton of Marion's Brigade, under the disguise of a British officer, in and about the city of Charleston, gathered important information regarding British troop and supply movements. While on this mission, he captured and gained the services of General Williamson who served the British as a loyalist. Williamson, after the submission of Charleston, took up activities within the walls of the city as an employee of the enemy. Later realizing the gradual decline of English power, he returned to the fold by consenting to act as a partisan spy within the walls of Charleston. Not long after this incident, Singleton, still disguised as the Tory Captain Furness, led a British supply train headed by Lieutenant Charles Meadows into ambush. The train was captured, and the enemy troops killed, wounded, or taken. Lieutenant Meadows himself fell into the hands of the patriots.

Within the walls of Charleston garrison was a social circle little influenced by military actions, a selfish gossiping group that, as portrayed in Katherine Walton, set Charleston apart from her sister cities. Feudal-minded, her citizens strongly believed in false social distinction. Acknowledging no superiors, they defended their honor as did the knights

of the Middle Ages. Their hospitality was lavish, and abundance, even during wartime, was a prime requisite of every entertainment. Though complacent, Charleston was never barbarous, for she possessed a picturesque civilization marked by charm of mind and manners.[60] On the one hand, were the fashionable Rivingtons, Smiths, Harveys, Campbells -- those who had much in common and who through their wealth, social status, and feelings, were closely attached to English society. On the other hand, were the Gadsdens, Savages, Edwards, Fergusons, Pinckneys, Elliotts -- names allied with dignity and patriotism. Charleston was never without her social affairs, not even during the bitterest period covered by this study. This society was the foundation of ante bellum Charleston. Later this same society consistently snubbed or disregarded the attempts of anyone outside its narrow clique to effect changes in social policy. It was this same society that was to break the heart of Simms, Charleston's greatest man of letters.

While performing his military duties in the outskirts of the city, General Williamson was taken prisoner

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60. Vernon L. Parrington, Main Currents in American Thought, Vol. II, pp. 109-18.

by Colonel Walton who did not know the general had been convinced by Singleton to act as a spy for the American cause. Everywhere the loyalists were in alarm over the capture of Williamson, but the patriots in the city were keyed to a high degree of exaltation. Immediately the British cavalry was sent to rescue the captive. Surprising the partisan camp, they succeeded in recapturing Williamson and at the same time took Colonel Walton prisoner. Having fallen in love with Katherine Walton, Colonel Balfour, the British commander in Charleston, demanded her hand in marriage as the only possible means of releasing her father. While under oath to her father, she refused the commander's offer until the time when Colonel Walton was prepared for his execution. When she did consent, she was too late; her father had paid the penalty. In the last paragraph of Katherine Walton, Simms clearly reveals his method of treating the above historical incident:

> It may be well to mention that, in our progress, we have dealt largely with real historical personages. Our facts have mostly been drawn from the living records. Our dialogues, our incidents, our portraits, have mostly a traditional, if not an historical origin. We may add that many of the details in the narrative of Colonel Walton have been borrowed from those in the career of the celebrated Colonel Hayne. It was Hayne who

> took Williamson prisoner, as described in our story. He himself was captured under the very circumstances given in the case of Walton; and the details of the execution are gathered from the lips of living witnesses.[61]

The opening chapters of The Scout, the fourth novel in the series, marked the ending of five years of war with England. The enemy, leaving the northern colonies as an unsuccessful endeavor, almost wholly transferred their men and materials to the southern colonies which, at the time, were left to carry on single-handed. Lacking money, experience, training, and even unity, the South was bound to be defeated time and time again.[62] According to Simms, South Carolina and Georgia, completely under the British heel, became the refuge for all the loyalists driven out of the other colonies, and these states were considered by the foe to be under complete control. General Gates, shamed and disappointed, fled to North Carolina with his shattered remnants to await the judgment that his country later was to pass upon him. General Greene, cautious and courageous, knew that

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61. Katherine Walton, p. 474.

62. John Fiske, op. cit., pp. 197-201.

with the bare fragments of his army he could expect nothing except disaster unless he baffled his opponents. Time alone could bring victory. Every delay increased his own ranks at the same time decreasing those of his opponents. Simms informs the reader that small bands kept filtering in from bordering states to offer their assistance.[63] North Carolina, Virginia, Maryland, and Delaware began to shake themselves free from the British yoke. Still more daringly the partisans continued to leave their hiding places to prey upon their adversaries. Gradually, after many defeats, the American troops began to lose their timidity, and by their indecisive yet brilliant attacks, raised the hopes of Greene.

The British forces under Ferguson, one of their ablest partisan commanders, were annihilated at King's Mountain.[64] At Compens the invincible Tarleton was beaten by Morgan with his greatly inferior army.[65] In The Scout Simms reveals that Marion

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63. Allan Nevins, op. cit., p. 377.

64. John Fiske, op. cit., pp. 247-8.

65. Ibid., p. 255.

fought the enemy in the swamps in the southernmost parts of the state, while Sumter, in a chain of rapid actions in the middle country, seriously impaired the strength of smaller enemy parties which were scattered throughout the entire territory in an effort to suppress native resistance. Thus in South Carolina the turn of affairs changed rapidly for the better as the panic following Gates' defeats were off. Though forced from the field at Guilford, after several days Greene turned upon his opponent, Cornwallis, and chased him out of the state.[66]

After the exit of Cornwallis, Lord Rawdon again took command defeating Greene at Hobkirk's Hill, a fruitless victory, however.[67] Though losses were about equal on both sides, the Americans had a slight advantage in that they gained the sympathy of the surrounding inhabitants. At this time the struggle between the Whigs and the Tories was at its height. No attention was paid either to sex or age. Fire and murder were the

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66. Ibid., pp. 260-1.

67. Ibid., pp. 263-4.

two chief principles of warfare as invader and invaded tore at each other like wild beasts.

The entire territory was overrun by bands of outlaws coming from the borders of Georgia or the wilds of Florida to a place where there was almost a complete absence of civil authority.[68] Mounted on horses, these renegades, as portrayed in The Scout, swept the entire state, first operating on the Savannah, then descending the Pedee. The more the inhabitants suffered from these roving marauders, the more they gathered in small defensive groups until almost all of South Carolina was up in arms.[69] This dark period marked, perhaps, the severest trials the state was to experience.

As time drew near to the closing battles of the Revolution, many of the Tories, converted to the patriot cause, displayed their bravery fighting on the popular

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68. The Scout, p. 13.

69. "Plunder and depredation prevail so in every quarter I am not a little apprehensive all this Country will be laid waste. Most people appear to be in pursuit of private gain or personal glory." Letters of Maj.-Gen. Nathanael Greene, p. 74.

side. Simms wrote as follows about the reasons for individual and group differences:

> The Revolutionary War in South Carolina, did not so much divide the people, because of the tendencies to loyalty, or liberty, on either hand, as because of social and other influences -- personal and sectional feuds -- natural enough to a new country in which one-third of the people were of foreign birth.[70]

The foregoing discussion of the general background of The Scout prepares us for a more detailed analysis of its plot. This fourth book in the series opened with the excursions of the group of Tories, the Black Riders of the Congaree, who ravaged the entire countryside during the critical period of the early 1780's.[71] While they pursued personal and petty plunder on the Wateree, Lord Rawdon fled Camden,[72] leaving it in flames. Sumter's

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70. The Scout, p. 159.

71. See f.n. 69.

72. "The fall of Fort Watson, breaking Rawdon's communication with the coast made it impossible for him to stay where he was. On the 10th of May the British general retreated rapidly, until he reached Monk's Corner, within thirty miles from Charleston; and the all-important post of Camden, the first great prize of the campaign, fell into Greene's hands." John Fiske, op. cit., p. 264.

forces surrounded Orangeburg; Marion and his men effected the surrender of Fort Motte; the British evacuated their post at Nelson's Ferry.[73] The only fortified possession they held was the one at Ninety-Six, a station of extreme importance to the enemy in the back country, which, accordingly, they planned to defend until the very end.[74]

In comparison to the petty spoils that fell into the hands of the Black Riders, their dangers were plentiful and immediate -- so many that they became discouraged, thinking their leader had bungled. Thus the patriots were by no means the only fighting group that was having difficulties.

After a brief skirmish with the British, the

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73. "Victories followed now in quick succession. Within three weeks Lee and Marion had taken Fort Motte and Fort Granby, Sumter had taken Orangeburg, and on the 5th of June, Augusta surrendered to Lee, thus throwing open the state of Georgia." Ibid.

74. "Determined not to lose this last hold upon the interior, and anxious to crush his adversary in battle, if possible, Rawdon collected all the force he could, well-nigh stripping Charleston of its defenders." Ibid., p. 265.

partisans under Colonel Conway, half-brother of the leader of the Black Riders, pressed forward with increased speed for Ninety-Six to prepare General Greene for the coming of fresh British troops to be used to assist Colonel Cruger in defending his post.[75] According to Simms, Ninety-Six was well garrisoned, being the most valuable of all the posts in the state. To secure it against attack was essential, since it not only offered communication with the Indians, but checked the Whig settlements in the west and at the same time protected the loyalists in the north, south, and east. In addition, it was a depot for recruits drawn into the fold from the neighboring areas.

Colonel Cruger, an American loyalist,[76] was in command of the post. Calling in the help of neighboring slaves, he soon completed a ditch around the stockade to facilitate safe communication between various points of defense. For defense, Cruger chose a select group

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75. Francis V. Greene, op. cit., p. 250.

76. Allan Nevins, op. cit., pp. 50-2.

of about six hundred, many of them riflemen of the first quality.[77]

With the aid of the celebrated Polish patriot, Kosciuszko,[78] Greene started his siege with an inadequate force. The siege itself, one of the most critical events of the southern war, described by Simms, had lasted about a month when Colonel Conway, the partisan leader, joined the besiegers. All methods to force surrender were used while the enemy's provisions were fast being depleted. This loss could not be sustained long; the fall of the garrison was imminent. Conway, on his arrival, warned Greene of Rawdon's approach, much to the consternation of the attackers, for the fort was on the verge of capitulation.[79] After one more desperate attempt

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77. "This place had been elaborately and somewhat curiously fortified with stockades and deep ditches. Its garrison numbered 550 men, a Tory regiment from New York, another from New Jersey and some South Carolina loyalists. Cruger made a spirited defence." Francis V. Greene, op. cit., p. 250.

78. Ibid.

79. Ibid., pp. 250-1.

(characterized by errors according to later historians)[80] the Americans withdrew.[81] Unfortunately this was by no means the end of General Greene's misfortunes.

The post of Ninety-Six was abandoned immediately upon its rescue by the besiegers, and Lord Rawdon, seeing the greater dangers ahead, sped to the safer, low-lying seaboard country. The country posts which had been completely under British control had by this time fallen into the hands of the partisans, and those that remained were threatened momentarily. If the enemy in Charleston and Savannah wished to maintain their present supremacy they would be forced to concentrate their forces in strategic places. Promised reinforcements from Europe were not arriving; the Empire was exhausted, and the invading army, now largely composed of loyalists, increasingly lacked confidence.

By this time the operations of the British in South Carolina took place almost entirely within the land enclosed by the Santee, Congaree, and Edisto rivers.

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80. The Scout, p. 284. This cannot be authenticated in works cited.

81. Francis V. Greene, op. cit., pp. 231-2.

In this area Lord Rawdon proposed to hold his forces for any attack that the patriots might launch at anytime. However, the total concentration of his troops was still inadequate, for Greene offered him battle on the Edisto. Humiliated by his defeats, Rawdon finally turned his command over to Colonel Stewart after a short stay in the vicinity of Orangeburg and then retired inside the walls of Charleston.[82]

At the time of Stewart's promotion, the numerical strength of the British and American forces was nearly equal; Stewart's numbered between 1500 to 2000 while Greene's was fully 2000.[83] Although Greene had no regular infantry, he was more than a match for his opponent in cavalry. Simms mentions that there was no better cavalry anywhere, and it grew more numberous daily by accessions from the country gentry.

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82. Ibid., p. 252.

83. "Greene had 2,300 men of whom 1,254 were continentals and the rest militia. Steward had an equal number, but all veterans; 6 regiments -- 3d, 63d, 64th, Grenadiers, New York Volunteers and New Jersey volunteers." Ibid., p. 254.

Unwilling to fight except on his own terms, Greene was still in no condition to invite hostility. On the other hand, Stewart, weighted down with his new responsibilities, was afraid to take the chance of any bold action. Meanwhile Rawdon, still in Charleston and sensing the plight of Stewart, gathered a small force and marched toward Orangeburg in order eventually to effect a meeting with his successor. Though Rawdon was soon to be strengthened by Cruger's retreating army, these reinforcements had not arrived as yet, and Cruger might even have been cut off by Pickens,[84] one of the most famous of the partisans of Carolina. Fortunately, for the British, however, Pickens's cavalry was too tired to continue pursuit, and thus Cruger was allowed to continue unmolested.

The partisans under the commands of Marion, Sumter, Pickens, Lee, Mahem, Hampton, Horry, Taylor, and many others were allowed no respite. Throughout the entire spring and early summer of 1781, their cavalry was kept in motion, inflicting defeat whenever and wherever possible.

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84. Ibid., p. 252.

The above events form the background intervening between the narratives of The Scout and The Forayers. The Forayers, the fifth in the series of the seven revolutionary romances, picks up the history at this point of the struggle.

In contrast to others in the series, this novel subordinates historical background to social events which, strange as it may seem, contributed greatly to South Carolina's internal troubles, owing largely to the many diverse social and temperamental elements in the people themselves. For instance, the first settlers, coming to the low country as early as 1701, founded their settlements, not together, but in separate colonies.[85] Here in one place were the Scotch, loyal and stubborn. In another section lived the Irish, enthusiastic yet seldom loyal to English domination. Among these larger units were scattered settlements of Quakers, rigid of habit, unaccommodating, desiring little social union except among themselves. German, Swiss, and French, regarding each other with unfriendly eyes, settling in small groups, did not

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85. History of South Carolina, p. 148.

participate in common purposes. According to The Forayers, the country from settlement to settlement was marked by the old, narrow Indian footpaths which were the only roads the settlers had. A large number of these settlers were graziers who kept great herds of cattle. Large bodies of wild land, sometimes many miles remote from their own settlements, were taken up and established as pastures. A naturally selfish policy made the owners hostile to the approach of new settlers, for each additional colony abridged the open range.[86] Thus, many of the problems arising in this long stretch of partisan struggle were the result of disinterested or even disunited groups. To increase dissension were the slaves, the poor whites, the plantation laborers, and planters, all with interests too diverse to form a stable whole.

Throughout many chapters in The Forayers, Simms expresses his ideas on society. Willie Sinclair, in his discussion of his love for Bertha Travis with his sister Carrie, is Simms's mouthpiece for expressing his

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86. Ibid., p. 143.

own views:

> 'No one, more highly than myself, esteems the claims of social castes. It is a natural condition, and rightly possesses authority; but, God forbid! that I should sullenly and sternly reject the occasional individual whose personal claims put him above his condition in society! He has received from nature his badges of nobility, and society is simply ridiculous when it opposes itself to the credentials which come patent from the hand of God Himself! Be assured that, in all such conflicts, the class refusing to acknowledge the individual only proves itself unworthy, and perils all the securities upon which it prides itself.'[87]

The warfare between Whig and Tory continued unabated, each trying to get the upper hand in the control of not only the spoils of their plunders, but also the feelings of the people in the territory of their activities. The Tory band under "Hellfire" Dick of Tophet continued to drive cattle belonging to plantation owners to places where it could sell them for its own private needs. The citizens suffered, but little could be done to alleviate the crisis. Many landowners were forced to abandon their homes and join either the

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87. The Forayers, p. 87.

partisan or Tory bands or lose all their possessions and perhaps even their lives. One example was Colonel William Sinclair, a natural aristocrat, a southern gentleman of the old school, a loyalist whose son had joined the patriots. It was the plan of "Hell-Fire" Dick and his band to surround Sinclair's Barony and seize what property they could.

The supreme commander of the British forces, Lord Rawdon, unable to effect a meeting with Colonel Stewart, at this time fully engaged with the foraying parties of Marion and Sumter, marched his remaining detachment toward Orangeburg. Still retreating from Ninety-Six, Colonel Cruger, too, was marching to Orangeburg to join Stewart.[88] On the 16th day of July, 1781, Stewart reached Orangeburg after suffering minor rear-column defeats by Marion's troopers. Though not finding it

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88. "Rawdon arrived the following day after an exhausting march of 180 miles. As quickly as possible he started in pursuit of Greene, but finding that the latter had crossed the Broad he returned to Ninety-Six and made preparations for its evacuation. Leaving Cruger there to arrange for the departure of the numerous loyalists residing in the vicinity, Rawdon marched first to Fort Granby and then to Orangeburg, where he was joined by the 3d Regiment, Stewart, and soon after by Colonel Cruger, from Ninety-Six." Francis V. Greene, op. cit., p. 252.

difficult to repel the patriots or keep them at a distance, Stewart could not shake them off. Greene, lacking infantry and proper arms, ordered his men to withdraw from the vicinity of Orangeburg after hearing of Cruger's approach to assist Rawdon.

Such was the situation as pictured by Simms when the partisan leaders and Governor Rutledge met to plan their strategy, a strategy which was shortly to compel the enemy to abandon all remaining interior posts -- Orangeburg, Sutaw, Wantoot, Watboo, Biggin, Monk's Corner. When Rutledge suggested that the plan be carried out the following mid-summer, his proposal was seconded by General Greene and all of the other leaders. Since this combined action was to take place in the hottest part of the season, the movement was known as the Raid of the Dog Days.[89] The united council ended with the memorable frog and alligator feast prepared and served by Captain Porgy who, according to one critic, is the most interesting fictional character in the seven novels of this series.[90]

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89. History of South Carolina, p. 319.

90. Cambridge History of American Literature, Vol.I, pp. 313-17.

On the 13th of July the army was in motion. On the 14th Sumter's detachments (he was to command the campaign) swept into the low country, driving the scattered enemy behind the walls of Charleston.

The above circumstances formed the background for Eutaw, the next to the last novel of the revolutionary series. The Americans continued their small but forceful advances which ate down enemy territory bit by bit. In the meantime, while loyalist renegades ravaged the territory, the British attempted to concentrate their forces in order to withstand this unexpected and concentrated drive. The situation was by this time becoming so severe that even Lord Rawdon, in his talk with the loyalist Colonel Sinclair, felt that the war was soon to end:

> "Nothing that could occur tells more unfavorably for the British cause than these two facts -- the defection of old friends, and the rising of these, at this moment, who have hitherto been content to remain in quiet under our protection. It argues, in both cases, a growing conviction of our declining power."[91]

Greene had withdrawn his tired army to the Santee Hills for a much-needed rest, leaving the low country

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91. Eutaw, p. 195.

between Orangeburg and Charleston (the only places supposedly unassailable still held by the British) to Sumter and the other patriot leaders and their men.[92] According to Simms's narrative, Lee's troops took Dorchester where they found large booty of horses, stores, and fixed ammunition. At the same time Henry Hampton captured the post at Four-Holes bridge. Wade Hampton pressed toward Goose-Creek bridge, destroying the post at that place and cutting communication between Dorchester and Monk's Corner. Unable to effect a meeting with Sumter, Hampton continued his successful advance toward the outskirts of Charleston, giving the garrison an unpleasant scare, for it was never more inadequately prepared than at this moment.[93] But the outskirts was as far as he got, since General Greene's forces were too poorly

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92. "Greene gave his little army six weeks' rest in the comparatively salubrious region of the Santee Hills. During that time he received some fresh levies from North Carolina, carrying his strength to something over 2,000 men. He then resumed the offensive, and marched to attack Stewart." Francis V. Greene, op. cit., p. 254.

93. This entire action is fully cited in a letter to Greene. Sumter headed the letter, "Camp at Fevins Ponds, Santee, 22nd., July, 81.", Letters of Brig.-Gen. Thomas Sumter, pp. 45-6.

equipped and tired to come to his assistance. Unwilling to risk an attempted attack on the city with his small group, Hampton retreated to again join with Sumter in an endeavor to drive the foe out of Biggin. Seeing the danger in the ever-increasing numbers of patriots, the British, under Coates, burned their accumulated supplies, and before the arrival of the patriots, escaped by a route that Sumter had left uncovered. Pursuing, Lee and Mayham met the British at Quinby bridge where the enemy submitted after stiff resistance. The victors captured much booty including the British war chest and a large number of stores.[94] The assault on Quinby was made on the 17th of July, about four weeks after the relief of the siege of Ninety-Six. This expedition, though not as successful as it might have been, for Coates's entire force might have been captured, was an important victory as it inspired the country with confidence in its native valor.

Meanwhile, Coates needed the reinforcements that Lord Rawdon himself brought to him from Charleston. With a part of his own detachment Rawdon strengthened Coates. On his way back to Charleston he reoccupied

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94. Letters of Brig.-Gen. Thomas Sumter, pp. 41-4.

Dorchester and sent the garrison a strong body for its protection. He restored all the posts which the "forayers" had captured recently, and, satisfied that Greene was still unable to move against him, took for granted that Colonel Stewart would be abbe to maintain control of the British posts. He did all that was in his power to put the British cause in good condition before he left the country.

Being starved out of his post at Orangeburg, Colonel Stewart with an estimated 2300 troops evacuated his post and set out with the hope of finding better rations or perhaps of contacting Greene, who, though gaining in the number of his troops was yet very weak. By forced marches, Stewart hurried south from the Congaree and took position at Eutaw Springs where his troops, now thoroughly concentrated, numbered close to 3000 men. In perfect security, as he thought, he did not anticipate the union of Marion and Greene. Greene's army, by its rest, had gained both in health and morale. Strengthened by Pickens and Lee, Greene now resolved to give Stewart battle.[95]

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95. John Fiske, op. cit., p. 266.

Simms mentions that the chief units of the southern army led by Greene, Rutledge, Henderson, Marion, Sumter, Lee, and Pickens met the British troops under Stewart, Coffin, Sheridan, and Majoribanks on the 8th of September, 1781.[96] Completely triumphant in the beginning, the Americans pressed forward to prevent the British from rallying and to cut them off from any protective covering. If the patriots had been successful in this endeavor, the victory would have been complete. The engagement which so far had promised to be a well-earned victory, ended in disappointment, even in temporary defeat. Unable to withstand the withering fire, the American lines fell into the utmost confusion. Thus ended the famous battle of Eutaw which both parties claimed as a victory, involved, as it was, in great confusion and doubt.[97] Details of specific

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96. Ibid.

97. "In the first action the British line was broken and driven from the field. In the second Stewart succeeded in forming a new line supported by a brick house and palisaded garden, and from this position Greene was unable to drive him. It has therefore been set down as a British victory. If so, it was a victory followed the next evening by the hasty retreat of the victors, who were hotly pursued for thirty miles by Marion and Lee. Strategically considered, it was a decisive victory for the Americans." Ibid., pp. 266-7.

action were subjects of considerable question. In the general management of the conflict, there was undoubtedly much bungling. Nevertheless, the British power in South Carolina was completely prostrated by this battle, for the British regulars had lost their reputation for invincibility.

The battle of Eutaw ended the thread of historical events in Simms's novel of the same name; however, this same novel connected its predecessor, The Forayers, with Woodcraft, the last of the revolutionary romances which continued the narrative at this point. Woodcraft is oftentimes considered the best novel in the whole series of seven, not because of its historical background but because of its fictional quality.[98] With Woodcraft the Revolutionary War in South Carolina drew to a close, a struggle that had lasted over two and one-half years. No longer was it possible that a large section of our country would remain under complete control of a foreign power. No longer was the entire status of the people, government, and country in jeopardy.

Prior to their evacuation from Charleston, the British had control of only small and scattered sections

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98. Cambridge History of American Literature, Vol.I, p. 312-17.

along the Atlantic seaboard. Persecution was still rampant, however, for the invaders were angered at the loss of so much land and property. Up to this point South Carolina had lost twenty-five thousand slaves who were, during the course of the war, transferred from Carolina ricefields to the sugar estates of the West Indies.[99] According to Simms, the provisional peace was drawn and signed at Paris on the 13th of November, 1782.[100] The 14th of December of the same year marked the evacuation of Charleston.[101] How embarrassing it must have been for these proud Britishers to leave a place that had been so rewarding in both pleasure and profit. Reluctantly, General Leslie, successor of Lord Rawdon, drew up final plans. The legions of General Wayne were ordered to occupy the abandoned garrison. Since none of the forces under Marion, Sumter, or Mayhem were permitted to be present at the re-occupation of the city,[102] the partisans were deeply indignant. The militia, likewise, were not

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99. Ibid.

100. Woodcraft, p. 5. This date cannot be authenticated in works cited.

101. Allan Nevins, op. cit., p. 395.

102. Ibid., p. 396.

allowed to witness the withdrawal of the enemy, the reason for this exclusion being that all were too poorly attired to appear at such a public ceremony. Embarrassed and sorrowful, Marion dissolved his brigade. With this dissolution, which was the last significant historical incident in the background of his novels, Simms brought the narrative in his revolutionary series to a close.

Despite the fact that a reading of these novels will show that Simms romanticized his historical events, a close study of this history, carrying through the entire series, reveals that the chronology of these major events parallels the dates of the actual happenings as recorded in the modern works which have been used as the basis for this study. In many cases, for example, the fall of Fort Motte and Orangeburg, the date of Greene's assumption of command of the southern army, and numerous other dates marking the progress of the Revolutionary War in South Carolina, including the time of various actions which took place in other areas and upon which this progress was based, have not been mentioned outright. The reason for this is quite evident. Simms wrote his novels with the idea of writing interesting fiction of which history

was a necessary ingredient. Fiction cluttered with dates did not fulfill this requirement. Instead, he mentioned only the significant dates of major events and proceeded to create other important actions using these dates as stepping stones in the development of his plots. Interest in the narrative is what Simms wanted to create. Nevertheless, the interested reader would not be too troubled in making an accurate check on specific happenings by reverting to the proper times and checking these occurrences against the information that he gave in his works. Although Simms's chronology is not entirely sequential (for many points mentioned in The Partisan, especially, are again brought out in subsequent novels), the emphasis placed upon these circumstances establishes their significance in the over-all portrayal of the general history. His ability to be accurate and true in his interpretation of specific military exploits might be attributed to his being a military man himself. With his vast store of knowledge in practically every field, Simms was a helpful counselor to the Confederacy during the Civil War. Trent had this to say about his military prowess:

> Simms was an able student of tactics. During the Civil War, he anticipated moves made by the confederate staff in connection with the relief of Fort Sumter.[103]

William B. Cairns, also, in his analysis of Simms's fiction, thought that his military endeavors might have had a bearing on his work.

> He (Simms) advocated extreme measures, and when the Civil War came Simms took great interest in the attack on Sumter, and made suggestions for fortifications, some of which were adopted.[104]

With this military interest as a part of his guiding force, Simms chose the period between May, 1780, and December, 1782, as the time to be covered by his series, for the engagements of these two years in Carolina are strategically the most interesting of the whole war. In his narrative backgrounds lies a wealth of historical information which cannot be found elsewhere. A study of the events of this period would certainly be incomplete if his works were not included. By consulting them the scholar would not only get history in the general sense but also a history backed by an exciting, moving, and revealing narrative.

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103. William P. Trent, William Gilmore Simms, p.261.

104. William B. Cairns, A History of American Literature, p. 429.

In regard to the progress of the military parties, Simms was fair to both; the patriots had their reverses as well as their advances; the opposition, likewise, had its successes and failures. His accounts treated both with equal gusto. It would seem highly probable that a man with as intense a patriotism for his state and country as Simms possessed would be a victim of his own feelings and emotions, but his treatment is not tainted with prejudice.[105] A careful study of the detailed operations maps of the progress of the armies during this period which Greene includes in his The Revolutionary War and the Military Policy of the United States showed that Simms knew the material about which he was writing. The movements of the British and American forces are shown for each of the major engagements and important actions. These maps are complete to the exact positions of troops and fortifications and can be followed with the information that Simms continually presents.

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105. Francis V. Greene, op. cit., plates 31,32,33, 34,35,36, and 37.

Authenticity of Historical Settings

In addition to specific military information, these afore-mentioned maps have been invaluable in tracing and establishing the various boundaries to which Simms referred in his romances. They are exact in pointing out the specific areas which were under the jurisdiction of certain leaders and groups of American patriots and British dragoons. The topographical legends indicate the numerous swamps in which the partisans fought, the areas where the Americans camped, rivers that were mentioned throughout the narrative, and all of the local settings which composed the background for Carolina's partisan warfare. These maps trace the true warfare of the country. By them the reader can check the sparseness of the settlements and the extent of the plains which indicated the employment of cavalry; the intricate woods and morasses as strikingly denote the rise and importance of riflemen. The partisan brigades combined the qualities of both. These maps further establish the fact that Simms knew his geography, not only of South Carolina but also of some of North Carolina and Georgia. He wove his geographical information into

his novels with a skill unlike that of an ordinary writer of fiction but like that of a skilled geographer. Fifty years passed between the period about which he wrote and the time during which he wrote his novels. Many descriptive details are undoubtedly the products of his imagination, but the general characteristics of the forest, swamp, and plain do not change to any great degree over such a short period.

Simms's geographical interest does not lie in the individual engagements, but in the strategy of the campaign as a whole. To understand this approach it is needful to have a clear comprehension of the physical peculiarities of the country. The reader may look at South Carolina as divided into large sections, separated by rivers, each fringed by large belts of swamp. For troops to cross these obstacles, even in small parties, great care and local knowledge were requisite. The transportation of artillery and stores was out of the question. Moreover, the unhealthful nature of the climate made prolonged activity in the lower districts impossible. Farther inland, the rivers branched into smaller streams, the soil became more solid, the air more wholesome. Thus throughout the entire period

of the campaign each army endeavored to push its opponent in order to secure the advantage of the more traversable country. The battles, for the most part, excluded geography, for they were really matters of hard fighting in which abundant courage was shown.

Authenticity of Information about Characters

Simms could not have been authentic in his plot and setting without including reliable information with reference to actual historical figures who not only planned and executed the strategy of specific encounters but engineered the many different groups toward a complete and final victory. These characters live in their surroundings and are to be considered not so much for themselves as for the parts they play in a larger field of action. Both military and civil characters were essential in the complete fulfillment of the military endeavors of the people. Remove these characters and the plots would change into a hodge-podge of disorganized and confused activity. How could the story of the Revolutionary War be told without mentioning and revealing the military prowess of Francis Marion? What fictional character could Simms have created to take Marion's place

in the narrative without at least patterning him partially on the "Swamp Fox's" magnificent accomplishments? It was Marion and men like him who made the Revolution in the South. It is true that Simms could have substituted the fictional for the historical, but why do so when the reader could readily identify the characters by their activities? By their activities and their accomplishments the reader knows them. Cornwallis, Tarleton, and Majoribanks are as much a part of British and Tory revolutionary history as Greene, Sumter, Pickens, and de Kalb are a part of the patriot cause. His characterizations are as closely drawn as are these same personages in the later writings of Fiske, Greene, Nevins, and Schlesinger. Not only does Simms stress the military abilities of these celebrities since most of them are military figures, but he also lays emphasis on the traits that make them what they are.

Space does not permit a detailed analysis of each historical character in any one of the seven volumes which average nearly five-hundred pages in length. However it would be quite unjust to omit even a partial sketch of at least a few of those who played major roles. In his delineations of character, as in his portrayal of specific

military actions, Simms was not partial. He pointed out the faults as well as the virtues.

Since Marion is considered as the representative of the genius of partisan warfare, his activity and character are more completely drawn in detail than are the actions and persons of the other characters. Greene aptly evaluated the performance of this partisan leader in a letter dated April 24, 1781, which was sent to Marion himself. In it, perhaps, lies the key to Marion's greatness. He wrote:

> To fight the enemy bravely with the prospect of victory, is nothing; but to fight with intrepidity under the constant impression of defeat, and inspire irregular troops to do it, is a talent peculiar to yourself.[106]

The famous partisan leader had the art of securing the fidelity of those around him in quite as great a degree as he possessed that other great military art of extracting good service out of the most doubtful materials. No commander was more concerned about the comfort and safety of his men. He was father as well as commander. His

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106. Life of Francis Marion, p. 244.

men had confidence in his love of justice, and this made them always willing to abide by his decisions. No duel took place among his officers during the entire term of his command.[107] Simms, throughout his pages, pictured Marion as being kind and indulgent in his nature, but stern and resolute in war.

In The Scout, a portrayal of the activities of General Greene after he had succeeded Gates in command of the remnants of the southern army, Simms compared the abilities of both Gates and Greene:

> Gates' true merit lay in the prudence with which he prosecuted an enterprise, which he had sacrificed by conceit and improvidence. The genius of Greene was eminently cautious, and his progress in South Carolina was unmarked by any rashness of movement, or extravagance of design.[108]

Of General Sumter, the "Game Cock," the reader gets a partial picture through the character of Cornwallis who considered him the greatest obstacle which the British had encountered in this country. The great responsibilities tendered Sumter when put in command of the "Raid of the Dog Days" and his ability to handle his assigned duties

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107. History of South Carolina, p. 330.

108. The Scout, p. 9.

to completion are ample evidence of his military accomplishment. Aside from his military duties, Governor Rutledge was a profound and honorable politician, an acute lawyer, and an admirable orator, one of the ablest in that day, in all of the Confederacy.[109] In the character of Rutledge, Simms portrayed the workings of the civil element and the part it played with the military in winning the war.

It was in men like these (excluding Gates) that South Carolina was particularly strong, and it was their devotion, talents and extraordinary endeavors that finally brought victory. They were national figures in whom she could entrust her future. They are only a few of the many heroes who have continued to live after almost two hundred years.

The British, too, were not without their memorable leaders. Earl Cornwallis, one of the best of the many soldiers sent by the mother-country to the colonies, had taken charge of the southern army after the fall of Charleston. Portrayed with an excellent judgment, "he was

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109. History of South Carolina, p. 167.

too good a soldier to omit, or to sleep in the performance of his duties."[110] His legionary, Tarleton, active, cruel, unscrupulous of courage, "seemed to confide in the impetuosity of his onset than to any ingenuity of plan, or careful elaborateness of maneuvers."[111]

Simms did not forget the all-important role of women and their influence on the general outcome. In his heroine, Katherine Walton, he embodied all the attributes of the southern lady, performing, as she did, all she could for the cause of independence. Of her and the women of South Carolina he said:

> She gloried in the name of a rebel lady, and formed one of that beautiful array, so richly shining in the story of Carolina, who, defying danger, and heedless of privation, spoke boldly in encouragement to those who yet continued to struggle for its liberties.[112]

The Treatment of Historical Materials

The forty years from 1830 to 1870 marked a remarkable change in American literature. Often referred to as the Romantic Movement, this change gave America a new literature

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110. The Partisan, p. 15.

111. Ibid.

112. Ibid., p. 120.

which, in breadth and quality, was comparable to the literature of England during the same period. The most striking characteristic of this trend was immediate literary growth in the various sections of the country; New England, the Middle Atlantic area, and the South advanced rapidly in the field of letters. Naturally, there was a definite touch of provincialism in all this writing, since the sectional relationships in this new country were never closely knit. There were too many vast differences in the economic and social conditions to allow an even development. With this external change in the literary world came another change of equal importance, a change which though generally unrecognized was, nevertheless, resident in the minds of the *literati*, who were soon to become more openly expressive as they realized that there existed in the native materials a great future for literary endeavor. If used, these materials might create a distinctly characteristic literature.

Simms was one of the writers who assisted this movement. Like others he, too, became interested in building an American literature which would be free from European influence. In his works, chiefly in his revolutionary

romances there appear the life, landscape, and ideals of his native state. In this respect his novels show a mixture of both national and sectional characteristics.

Like many writers he believed that a work to have a lasting quality should contain historical information. It was for this reason that he exploited the past, relating historical incidents in a manner more inclusive than that of any other American writer before his time. To him history in fiction was art in fiction. Paradoxically art and history were separate yet inseparable. Simms believed that in a real sense the artist was the true historian, for

> It is he who gives shape to the unknown past, --who yields relation to the scattered fragments,-- who unites the parts in coherent dependency, and endows, with life and action, the otherwise automata of history. It is by such artists, indeed, that nations live. It is the soul of art alone which binds periods and places together; -- that creative faculty which, as it is the only quality distinguishing man from other animals, is the only one by which he holds a life-tenure through all time -- the power to make himself known to man, to be sure of the possessions of the past, and to transmit, with the most happy confidence in fame, his own possessions to the future.[113]

By the standards with which he judged the artist and the historian, he himself can be judged. According

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113. Views and Reviews in American Literature, p. 23.

to Simms, the historical romancer had the power to

> preserve the treasures, --provide the jewels of a nation, when they embalm, in the 'cedar oil' of immortality, the great deeds which have done honor to mankind.[114]

The chief purpose of art, Simms believed, was to please and to instruct, emphasizing not so much the period when the work was written, but the period when future generations would use his history to satisfy their curious minds.[115] With this idea in mind he wrote his romances. The bare skeleton of meaningless dates and names was nothing to him, except that a skeleton history was necessary to furnish it with life and character. Didactic or moralistic fiction never could possess the individuality which was essential to its life; it would be as characteristic of one country as another and would fail, therefore, to excite a very strong enthusiasm in any. Ruins of the historic past were a part of the basic skeleton and to this extent were their own historians. In chapter two of his novel, The Partisan, Simms made this point clear when he chose Dorchester as the background for his narrative.

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114. Ibid., p. 36.

115. Ibid., p. 41

> It is one of the visible dwelling places of Time; and the ruins that still mock to a certain extent, his destructive progress, have in themselves a painful chronicle of capricious change and various affliction. They speak for the dead that lie beneath them in no stinted number; they record the leading features of a long history, crowded with vicissitudes ... But our purpose now is with the past, and not with the present.[116]

But how did he arrive at the necessary material for a story?

In selecting his theme, Simms was careful to select one which was national in character, because a national theme seemed to him to be the most enduring. To be thoroughly convinced of this fact he looked back into literature to the most popular writers of all periods. He noticed that these writers selected any one of three leading subjects -- their religion, their country, themselves. Whether he as the writer spoke directly of himself, his country, or his religion, he would have to speak sincerely from "the fullness of his soul and from the overflowings of his burdened heart."[117] The truest and most valuable inspiration would be found either in

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116. The Partisan, p. 18.

117. Views and Reviews in American Literature, op. cit., p. 38.

the illustration of the national history or in the national characteristics. It was his belief that any theme which was unallied to these would --very likely-- lack permanence and general interest.[118] The physical causes had always been used in the formation and fashioning of literary works; therefore, he had to receive much of the character of his writing from the physical properties of the country. The diversified character of the population, too, was to be one of the strong, modifying influences upon his work.

As an artist he had to discover that which was hidden from all other eyes -- what other minds had not preyed upon -- that which other persons had not sought. If he failed in this, he believed that he was not the man to preserve a nation's history. To him the romancer's privileges began where those of the historian ended, and the events which he used had to allow him to use the full exercise of his imagination. He had to be free to think, to see, and to invent his material without being afraid to cross the boundaries of truth and of such history that was found in undisputed records. In this respect his

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118. Ibid.

novels, then, would fall within the realm of romance, including, as they did, writing which had a romantic or imaginative character or quality and showed a suggestion of or association with the adventurous or chivalrous.[119]

Simms believed that thought, taking the form of specific judgments based upon conjecture, constantly arose beyond the limits of reality, and by reasoning what should have been from what was before him he separated the true from the probable. He kept asking himself what should be and what should not be. About inquiry he said:

> The inquiry is not idle, and history itself is only valuable when it provokes this inquiry -- when it excites a just curiosity -- awakens noble affections -- elicits generous sentiments -- and stimulates into becoming activity the intelligence which it informs.[120]

By keen thought and never-ending study which identified facts with their classes, tracing character through long series of details, and arriving at specific causes from associated results, he was able to prepare history. Accumulating all of this material, he created a store of knowledge which allowed him to speak and write with confidence on his subject. In putting down this information

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119. This is the essence of romantic fiction as given in The New English Dictionary on Historical Principles, Vol. VIII, p. 767.

120. Views and Reviews in American Literature, p. 39.

on paper his imagination joined with his judgment to lead and advise his thought, direct it to the desired facts, and portray in his mind's eye the heroes and the events. To Simms the whole underlying principle of history was the delightful guessing of what might have been from the slip-shod skeleton of bare facts that he knew. He made analytical studies of the many probabilities which he said were covered by the dust of past years. He had the necessary experience; he obeyed the laws of study and research, and recognized the guiding rules and general standards of examination.

When all the necessary information from which his product of art developed was ready for his workmanship, he became a painter and a creator. His picture grew beneath his hand, and the story moved with action. He became a living and authentic witness of the past and all the circumstances which he undertook to lay before the reader's eyes. From the beginning he attempted to dress his narrative with an atmosphere of a desired richness that would never be found in the works of an ordinary historian.

As regards passion, Simms believed that it was a

departure from the general laws of nature when one exhibited in a work of art, in fiction, the exercise of one passion exclusively.[121] Nature usually did not work after this fashion, for the passions existed or dwelled in groups. However, one of them could exercise a predominating power, and at least a part of the others would be still working as tributaries. The reader would be able to detect their presence in the over-all picture of the work. Perhaps no better example of this can be found in his revolutionary romances than in the character of Tarleton, the ruthless British commander, whose deeds were some of the most atrocious in the annals of South Carolina history. These deeds shown in The Partisan presented a contrast to what was known about him when he appeared in Mellichampe. He became less popular with his own party as the story progressed, and his former enemies began to think more favorably of him. In this novel the reader can detect Tarleton's inner feelings at rare moments, feelings that were in opposition to his general practices and character. Simms explained this treatment by stating:

> The sensibilities are more active at one moment than another, and he whose mood is usually merciless and unsparing, may now and then be permitted

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121. Mellichampe, p. 3.

> the blessing of a tear, and the indulgence of a tenderness, under the influence of an old and hallowed memory kept alive and sacred in some little corner of the heart when all is ossified around it.[122]

Although Simms wrote historical romances, he cannot be considered a "genuine" romanticist in every sense of the word. He is one only in degree. He objected to the treatment which stressed only the highest attributes of the individual or of society. He disliked the inclusion of only that which was the ideal in the mind or in the workings of a delicate imagination. Throughout his series, he painted in vivid colors the erring actions of certain individuals and groups.

Many of the events in the series are based upon tradition. In several instances he altered the names of specific characters as they appeared in leading events. The traditional account of Janet Berkeley as given in chapter thirty-seven in Mellichampe closely resembled the historical account of notorious loyalist Colonel Brown of Augusta.[123] The death of Marion's nephew, Gabriel, varied

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122. Ibid., p. 3.

123. Ibid., p. 2.

from the historical fact, but,it, too, was supported by tradition.[124] When visiting the home of "Bertha Travis" in 1819, Simms gained a knowledge of the parties and events which formed the love story of Bertha Travis and Willie Sinclair in Eutaw,[125] the sixth novel in the series. Out of many which could be cited these are only three of the instances based upon traditional accounts.

Treatment of Setting

Throughout his novels, Simms had a reason for the descriptions of his native state; each scene, a new event, each carrying forward the action of the plot until he reached his climax. If the reader failed to understand the country where he placed the plots of his stories, he would fail to get a clear picture of the type of fighting for which the South was so well noted. Though beautiful, Carolina in those days was also primitive, and one must remember that Simms alone could have brought his readers the enjoyment they got because he knew the country about

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124. Ibid.

125. Eutaw, p. 382.

which he was writing, and that this intimate knowledge was one of his chief qualifications for a successful writer. In each of his revolutionary novels he was master in the description of landscapes, especially the luxuriant swamps in which the partisans found a refuge. Nevertheless, his portrayals of the southern plantations, "The Oaks" in The Partisan and the Middleton Barony in The Scout, are as closely drawn as are his descriptions of the partisan bivouacs in the Carolina morasses. As regards the battle scenes of Ninety-Six, Camden, and Eutaw Springs, they are interesting and accurate both from a fictional and a historical point of view.

Treatment of Character

In addition to his descriptions of landscape, Simms, by cleverly manipulating and combining the fictional with the historical, created one of the finest collections of characters found among the romantic novelists of his time. This array -- slave, swamp-sucker, plantation hand, planter, soldier, lawmaker - represented colorful phases of southern life. In these tales the Negro was drawn for the first time in full length.[126] Such, for instance, are Benny Bowlegs in The Forayers and Scipio in Mellichampe. Scipio is the example of Simms's servant and not the example of a slave. Simms portrays him as:

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126. Constance Rourke, American Humor, p. 201.

> a Negro among a thousand; one of those adroit agents who quickly understand and readily meet emergencies; one who never could be thrown from his guard by any surprise, and who, in the practice of utmost dissimulation, yet wore upon his countenance all the expression of candor and simplicity. Add to this that he loved his master and his master's daughter with a fondness which would have maintained his faithful, through torture, to his trust .... he took readily the instructions given him in their fullest scope.[127]

Bledgitt in The Foragers and Bostwick, the Squatter, in Woodcraft typified the southern poor white at his very worst. Captain Porgy, the fat and philosophic gentleman who appeared in all of the revolutionary novels except The Scout and Colonel Sinclair in The Foragers were examples of the southern gentleman and planter. Marion, Greene, and Cornwallis were only three of the national military figures characterized in these romances. Rutledge, governor of the state during the revolutionary period, greatly assisted partisan endeavors to oust the British from the South. Simms's women characters also represented both high and low types. Katherine Walton, the heroine in The Partisan, and Katherine Walton and Flora Middleton in The Scout represented the southern lady -- tall, fresh, well-mannered, courageous, and intelligent. Mrs. Bledgitt in The Foragers is the opposite -- ignorant, ill bred, ugly, and selfish.

Of all the characters created by Simms, Captain

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127. Mellichampe, p. 361.

Porgy and the poor white seemed to be the author's favorite. Porgy stands out as the most interesting figure in the revolutionary romances; nevertheless, one can say truthfully that Simms loved the rogue. Vernon L. Parrington made the following statement about Simms's rogues: "A gentleman's villain turns to a thing of wood in his hands, but a low-born he creates out of living flesh and blood."[128]

All of these characters are closely humanized. They perform naturally in their respective roles; their conversations are justified by their descriptions, and they are not out of character from beginning to end. Simms's acquaintance with the lower classes made it possible for him to include the colorful and picaresque figures in his narratives, making them, according to one critic, a part of the finest collection of homespun in our literature.[129] The reader remembers Mrs. Blodgitt by her constant nagging as illustrated in the following

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128. Vernon L. Parrington, op. cit., p. 128.

129. Ibid., p. 129.

conversation with her weak-willed son:

> 'Who talks of a fair fight, but your own fool head? ... Lord! ef it hed been me, I reckon I could ha' a hundred chainces for laying him ever the head with a hickory, or driving a sharp knife cl'ar down into his ribs. Ther's always chainces enough for any man that's got a man's heart in his buzzom, Pete Blodgit! But you ain't no man at all, as I've told you a thousand times.' 130

Likewise, the reader remembers the character of Thumbscrew, the patriot scout in Hellichampe, when he says,

> 'My idee is, that fighting is the part of a beast-brute, and not for a true born man, that has a respect for himself, and knows what's good breeding; and I only fights when there's brutes standing waiting for it. Soon as a man squints at me as if he was going to play beast with me, by the eternal splinters, I'll mount him, lick or no lick, and do my best, tooth, tusk, and grinders, to astonish him. But afore that, I'm peaceable as a pine stump, lying quiet in my own bush.' 131

The evil or abnormal characters he portrayed in a manner which made them true to life. The old maniac Frampton in The Partisan and the half-mad Nelly Floyd in Eutaw are only two actors of many in the ranks of the minor char-

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130. The Forayers, p. 42.

131. Hellichampe, p. 34.

acters who impress the reader. As Simms portrayed Nelly Floyd she,

> ...Was not a mere woman -- not, certainly, an ordinary one; she did not act as is the common mode with her sex. She did a thousand things from which most of them would shrink ... Her mind and heart, eminently just, never seemed to think it necessary to submit her conduct to any other control than her own will ... This regulated her impulses, and she obeyed them....[132]

Many of Simms's fictional characters evoke a lively emotional response. The reader loved Emily Singleton, admired Lance Frampton, was indifferent toward Major Proctor, disliked Conwell, chief of the Black Riders, hated "Hell-Fire" Dick of Tophet, the wily Tory leader who ravaged the homes of the innocent. These characters, clearly defined as they were, gave to the reader, upon first beginning the narrative, hints as to what they might do in given emergencies. In his placement of characters Simms did nothing more than use the artist's privilege.

> He placed his groups, in action, at his own pleasure, he used what accessories he saw proper, dismissed others, supressed the merely loathesome; brought out the heroic, the bold, and the attractive, into becoming prominence, for dramatic effect; and, filled out the character, more or

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132. Eutaw, p. 64.

> less elaborately, according to the particular requisitions of the story, without regarding the individual claims of the subordinate.[133]

In his characterizations of the southern gentleman Simms was strikingly effective, since he knew him as well as he did any other figure in southern life. He himself was a southern gentleman.

> It is quite evident that Simms uses himself as an example of his characterizations. He considered himself a gentleman before he was an author.[134]

Judging from the above comment, it seems safe to assume that his gentleman is as closely and as clearly drawn as Simms could have portrayed him. In him as in other characters one can perceive a sense of humor and a sharp observation on the part of the author.

Like his contemporaries, Cooper and Kennedy, Simms, on occasion, reveals his own personal attitudes in these novels even though his environment in contrast to that of Kennedy and Cooper sets him somewhat apart. The favorite son of Charleston and yet outside of the aristocratic ring, Simms never succeeded in gaining prestige

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133. Richard Hurdis, p. 10.

134. William P. Trent, op. cit., p. 109.

and admiration from the elite. Constantly snubbed into submission, he had great external forces to combat during the period in which he wrote. In contrast to Simms's social insecurity, both Cooper and Kennedy were members of the social aristocracy, Cooper in New York, Kennedy in Baltimore. Both were accepted by their aristocratic friends; both participated in their respective cliques.

Nevertheless, with this great difference in background all three chose the Revolutionary War, and it is largely by the works dealing with this period that they are remembered. Such a theme offered them rich opportunity. Cooper, in The Spy : A Tale of the Neutral Ground, dealt with the revolutionary activities in New York state; Kennedy, in his Horse-Shoe Robinson, sketched picturesquely the Tory uprisings in South Carolina in 1780. In his seven novels Simms covered a far larger canvas than his two fellow craftsmen. The works of all these, however, are characterized by an over-lapping of period, time, and incident.

In The Spy Cooper portrayed the revolutionary activities in Westchester County, New York, during the

early 1780's. The interest of the plot centered around Harvey Birch, pedler and patriot, and ranged back and forth over the neutral ground between the two opposing armies. Birch was dedicated to his country and was sustained by the confidence of Washington. In his accounts of the Wharton family Cooper depicted the strong loyalist tendencies of the upper classes in the North, a portrayal which was in sharp contrast to the patriotic endeavors of men like Birch and young Henry Wharton, a member of the family, but yet assisted the patriot cause. As an integral part of the plot, Cooper also described the activities of the group of marauders, the Skinners, who mushroomed into activity and "infested the county with a semblance of patriotism, and who were guilty of every grade of offense, from simple theft up to murder."[135]

Like Simms, Cooper was gifted with enormous energy, a gusto that turned him in the case of such early novels as The Bravo, The Heidenmauer, and The Headsman, toward foreign themes for fictional materials. He had a complete understanding of Whig and Tory activities during the Revolution, and combined with his ability to create

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135. James F. Cooper, The Spy, p. 132.

striking scenes, he, too, gave a vivid picture of the times. His treatment of history in fiction, in his own words, was much like that of Simms.

> A rigid adhesion to truth, an indispensable requisite in history and travels, destroys the charm of fiction.[136]

Although The Spy, which was greatly admired by Simms,[137] was written fully fourteen years before Simms wrote The Partisan, this differential does not mean that Simms was a mere imitator of Cooper. Granted that Cooper influenced Simms in the writing of his revolutionary romances, The Spy, only one work, was the incentive for seven works by the South Carolinian, all of which reveal the remarkable skill which Simms always showed in his description of conflict. In all these seven novels Simms portrayed with equal skill the officers of the two conflicting armies. His characterizations of Marion, Greene, and Lee are more striking than Cooper's delineation of Washington, for Washington in The Spy is little more than a shadow. In the use of the metal container carried by Harvey Birch and in his delineation of Washington, Cooper used secrecy as one of the romantic

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136. James F. Cooper, The Pioneers, p. 3.

137. Views and Reviews in American Literature, p.211.

trappings for the creation of suspense. These mysteries do not unfold until the end of the narrative. Simms did not use this method, for his characters and actions are always clearly defined; in this respect he was more realistic than Cooper. While no Harvey Birch appears in Simms's novels, the absence of a dominant character, or hero, is in keeping with his idea that the event rather than character was the more important standard for the creation of a lasting romance. However, in the characters of Ernest Mellichampe, Colonel Singleton, and Clarence Conway, Simms formed personages who, although not as strong from the hero standpoint, are as strong in carrying on specific plot incident. Even though Simms did not intend to create novels of character, his central personalities are portrayed with spirit.

Like Simms and Cooper, Kennedy pictured the disturbed and doubtful conditions of the Revolution. The narrative of Horse-Shoe Robinson is composed of the many battles, hairbreath captures, treachery, and murders that characterized the Tory ascendency in the South. The detailed portrayal of the Tory leader's skinning of the live wolf makes the incident one of the most memorable in

the novel. The chief action revolves around the activities of Horse-Shoe Robinson, a blacksmith, and Major Arthur Butler, both ardent patriots. In their adventures through the South, especially through South Carolina, they become entangled in the Tory activities of Tyrrel, a British spy, and Habersham's ruffians, only one of the many loyalist bodies who

> ... waged war with a vindictive malignity that is scarcely surpassed in the history of civil broils. The finest estates were sacked, the dwellings burnt, and the property destroyed with unsparing rage. The men were dragged from their houses and hung, the women and children turned without food or raiment into the wilderness, and political vengeance seemed to gorge itself to gluttony upon its own rapine.[130]

The love theme is carried out in the scenes between Mary Musgrove and John Ramsey, Mildred Lindsay and Major Butler. Marion, Tarleton, and Cornwallis are portrayed well by Kennedy.

The adventures of Major Butler and Horse-Shoe Robinson combined the characteristic Simms's southern gentleman and his devoted follower whose common sense and brawn

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130. John P. Kennedy, Horse-Shoe Robinson, p. 396.

lead him out of many close and dangerous situations, a relationship likewise effectively presented by Simms in his characterizations of Major Singleton and Lance Frampton in The Partisan. Like his contemporaries, Kennedy knew the extreme peril embodied in the patriot cause, and in Philip Lindsay, the father of the heroine, he represented the feelings of the wealthier classes. In the concluding section of Horse-Shoe Robinson, he vividly pictured the battle of King's Mountain, a portrayal similar to Simms's accounts of Eutaw Springs, Camden, and Guilford. Kennedy also combined interest of battle with the love theme in the rescue of Major Butler to form the high point of his fine novel. Although the portrayals of action and low-life characters stand out as being Kennedy's forte in Horse-Shoe Robinson, Simms is, nevertheless, Kennedy's superior in these two respects. For every interesting or breath-taking incident that Kennedy has in his novel, Simms has as many as three or four times that number in any of his revolutionary romances. As regards his low-life characterizations Kennedy was too much a gentleman to accurately picture in detail the down-and-outer as he really was.

To do this would have been contrary to his own aristocratic background and true feelings.

All of these writers combined patriotism, loyalty, and family affection with the view of appealing to the greatest number of readers. All show a distinct influence of Sir Walter Scott in their treatment of theme. They chose subject matter so universal that their novels were translated into several languages. Even though all three were highly versatile, Simms was by all odds the most prolific and many-sided, being a historian, geographer, dramatist, biographer, lecturer, essayist, poet, philosopher, Shakesperean editor, orator, legislator, journalist, critic, and novelist. One needs only to refer to his vast store of prose and poetic works to be convinced that in this irrepressible southerner we find no equal.

Simms, Cooper, and Kennedy are alike in their simple plots and in their development of suspense by introducing a variety of action. Although the characters at times seem stilted, because they are portrayed according to the conventions of an early period in our history and of specific sections of our country, they impart dramatic action sufficient to create breathless expectancy in the

reader. At all times there is a positive distinction between the heroic and villainous characters, each performing his duties in a manner to intrigue the reader into completing the story.

Conclusion

In many respects Simms did work of great value, not only from a literary standpoint in that his revolutionary romances mark a transition in the growth of our literature from pre-Civil War romanticism to the greater realism of such writers as Clemens and Howells, but also from a historical point of view in that these romances are authentic portrayals of the life, times, and conditions of our strategic struggle for independence.

In consequence, they should have a distinct place in our high school and college reading lists especially for students interested in history or English. The comparatively recent edition of Simms The Yemassee[139] with an introduction by Alexander Cowie represents what can be done toward introducing Simms to a wider student audience.

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139. Simms, William Gilmore, The Yemassee. Edited with introduction, chronology, and bibliography by Alexander Cowie. New York: The American Book Company, 1937.

For the general reader these romances are full of adventure, love, and historical conflict depicted in quite as lively a fashion as similar events in the tales of Cooper and Kennedy, being even more varied and, at times , more brutally frank in their presentation.

For the advanced student of history or literature there is in Simms likewise an undeniable appeal, since his writing embodies a political, economic, and social account of a section and people during a critical period in the growth of our country, and his treatment of plot, setting, and character illustrates a literary craftsman at work, disclosing how Simms, the artist, either heightened or omitted altogether specific episodes in order to achieve a desired effect.

Thus in William Gilmore Simms we find a writer of varied appeals, one who justifies more serious consideration than he has hitherto received.

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